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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Seventeenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 19 November 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. ALSTON

later: Mr. CEAUSU
(Vice-Chairperson)

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS:

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Second periodic report of the Domincan Republic (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS:

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (agenda item 6) (continued)

Second periodic report of the Dominican Republic (continued)(E/1990/6/Add.7, E/C.12/1994/15, E/C.12/1/Add.6, HR/CESCR/NONE/97/8)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of the Dominican Republic took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic) referring to the expressions of concern about the limited access of the population to drinking water, said there were many districts which did not have a safe water supply. The Government had begun to provide water to the north and other areas, and several pipelines were being constructed to serve the interior. Nevertheless, there were still considerable shortcomings in the supply and the Government was persisting in its efforts to provide easier access for the rural population to all amenities at low cost, through the construction of housing and settlements near centres of production.

3. Among the poorest classes there was a high rate of infant mortality, often as a result of dehydration due to the shortage of water. The Ministry of health, with the participation of the international community, had embarked on vaccination campaigns against certain communicable diseases. The Government had been able to curb an outbreak of dengue fever through preventive and educational measures and a comprehensive campaign to eliminate stagnant water in high-risk areas.

4. For the first time, the Government was seriously addressing the needs of disabled persons. Town planning and building rules had been formulated to provide appropriate facilities and the Government's commitment to that cause was reflected in budget increases for institutions serving the disabled. In addition, considerable support had been forthcoming from other quarters: the organizers of the national lottery and one particular NGO had been collaborating with the Government in seeking mechanisms to improve the everyday life of persons suffering from physical handicaps.

5. The prevalence of endemic diseases had been due to limited access to health services and, as a matter of priority, the Government had completed the construction of several hospital centres, some of which had been started as much as seven years ago. Similarly, the Government had worked tirelessly to complete the building of a number of housing units begun some years earlier. It was currently stepping up the efforts to deliver as many units as possible and as soon as possible. The UNDP was also providing assistance in planning the proposed State secretariat for housing and human settlements, which would be in charge of implementing the Government's housing policy.

6. Mr. SADI inquired about the cost and quality of drinking water in the Dominican Republic, and said he was also interested to know whether

pesticides, which contained carcinogens, were applied in accordance with safety guidelines. It would be useful to have a breakdown of the national budget in order to determine the proportion of resources allocated to social welfare activities.

7. Mr. TOCA SIMO said that, even though the Dominican water supply met international standards in terms of chlorine content, there were defects in the distribution network, such as faulty pipelines and tiltration systems, and it was not advisable to drink water direct from the tap. Generally, the cost was reasonable, but quantitatively, its supply was insufficient. An improved supply was one of the highest priorities set in the initial plans formulated by the Office of the President. Much had been done to rationalize the supply, but a series of obstacles had created delays in achieving of the goals set. There was no question of discrimination in the provision of water, as the Government had been implementing a systematic approach to provide for the needs of all communities, regardless of income level. Statistics and further details on the amount of water supplied would be submitted to the Committee as soon as the information was available.

8. For the first time in the history of the Dominican Republic, education, health and agriculture had been earmarked as the key areas for allocations in 1998 and the budget estimates had been submitted by the President to Congress for approval.

9. He could confirm that pesticides were widely used in the Dominican Republic, particularly in the sugar cane industry and indiscriminate use had produced harmful consequences, including serious water pollution. The Government was nevertheless pursuing a programme to remove all contaminants.

10. Mr. GRISSA said that he was puzzled by the suggestion that dehydration could be reversed by immunization. Furthermore, he did not believe that harmful chemicals, as opposed to bacteria, could be eliminated by boiling drinking water. He therefore wondered why the Government was spending large sums of money on providing water which was contaminated and, therefore, was not drinkable.

11. Mr. RIEDEL, referring to the section on article 9 in the corrected and expanded version of the second periodic report (HR/CESCR/NONE/97/8), said the figures for the real social security coverage were 6 per cent of the total population and 14 per cent of the active population. Those figures were astoundingly low and he wanted to know what the Government was doing to improve matters, particularly with respect to the rural population, where the problem was doubtless more acute.

12. Mr. TEXIER said that, during his visit, several Government representatives had spoken of the plan to establish a State secretariat for housing and human settlements. What time-frame was envisaged for the establishment of the secretariat, what would its functions be, and would it have a substantial budget to carry out its mandate? Again, what would be the share of the housing budget as between the State and the municipalities? In his view, some decentralization was needed and it was important for the municipalities - which were more in contact with day to day problems - to have an autonomous budget.

13. Lastly, in view of the need for housing security to be strengthened through the issue of property titles, what projects were envisaged to improve land registers and surveys and regularize land ownership?

14. Mr. ADEKUOYE, referring to the concept of reciprocity in some civil rights, asked what meaning was to be attached to the terms "right of donation" and "right of inheritance", as mentioned on page 6 of the corrected and expanded version of the second periodic report. Why was reciprocity required in those areas as far as aliens were concerned?

15. Mr. CEAUSU asked about the situation with regard to land ownership, particularly with reference to the rural population. Did the Government envisage a programme of agrarian reform as carried out in Latin America? It was a particularly interesting subject in that the assertion of economic rights often depended on the possession of arable land.

16. Mr. THAPALIA said that the Committee was impressed that the Government had doubled expenditure on education. On the other hand, substantial amounts had been spent on housing and water while the external debt remained high. How could resources be mobilized without compounding the debt burden? In many developing countries the poor sectors of the population were becoming poorer. How wide was the gap between the rich and poor in the Dominican Republic?

17. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether the Government was contemplating fiscal reform and requested further information on plans to assist the disabled. Were jobs to be set aside for them, or was a programme being devised to eliminate the barriers to their development? She would also like the delegation to comment on provisions for the elderly.

18. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic) said there was no inconsistency between the introduction of a vaccination campaign and the fight against dehydration, which resulted in the main from diarrhoeal diseases. A major drive to inform the public about rehydration methods had been launched. The promotion of vaccinations was aimed at preventing the spread of infection due to other types of diseases. Among other precautions, the boiling of drinking water was a viable method of controlling waterborne diseases.

19. The Government was deeply committed to resolving the country's problems, but could do so only one step at a time. She assured the Committee that effective measures would be adopted to bring the Dominican Republic closer to its social goals.

20. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) said it was a challenge to defend a Dominican report that had been prepared by a previous Government in 1994. He would remind the Committee that there was a big difference between the recent past and the present. For the first time, the Dominican Republic was sending a delegation with the intention of paying heed to the Committee's recommendations.

21. For some time, the country had been decapitalized by immense corruption. Nevertheless, the present Government was intent on revising the social security system in order to accommodate the needs of the most vulnerable

groups, with a view to offering universal coverage. In pursuing that objective the Government would rely heavily on the cooperation of the private sector.

22. As far as ownership of property was concerned, article 15 (b) of the Constitution stated that it was of major social importance that each Dominican household should be able to own land and that public credit should be made available on advantageous terms to give all citizens access to ownership of a comfortable and healthy home. Furthermore, the couple was regarded as the basic family unit and married women were considered as full citizens under the law, thus having every opportunity to develop their personalities. The law also made provision for married women to receive 50 per cent of the family property on break-up of a marriage.

23. The State secretariat for housing and human settlements, mentioned by Mr. Texier, had been proposed as part of the electoral platform of the party now in government. Although amalgamation of the different institutions operating in the housing field had not yet been achieved, they were coordinating their activities on housing programmes and urban improvement schemes, especially in deprived areas. UNDP was currently assisting the Government to prepare a first draft setting out the principal objectives and functions of the proposed secretariat and outlining how it would work with other State agencies. The Committee would be sent a copy when it was ready. It was difficult to say at present what the budget of the new secretariat would be, but it would include all sums allocated to existing housing institutions.

24. Decentralization and local government reform had also been an electoral promise made by the party now in power. The President had set up a committee to look into the question in consultation with local authorities and society at large, with the aim of achieving full autonomy for local authorities. The budget allocation from the central administration to local authorities had been increased by 1.2 per cent to 4 per cent, with further increases envisaged. Local authorities would also have to be restructured to prevent inefficient use of their new resources. Consideration was being given to models such as that applied in Puerto Rico, where, under decentralization, local authorities had to earn the right to receive new resources to benefit their communities.

25. A proper land survey was essential, since urban improvement and renewal was impossible without a clear demarcation of ownership of the land. The root of the present problems had been widespread corruption and administrative inefficiency, since land surveys had already been carried out early in the century for almost all of the country. Assistance in updating the land registers throughout the Dominican Republic had been offered by the Japanese Government. There were also a number of proposals for urban land surveys and a programme for granting title to land in deprived areas. A team of lawyers was reviewing the situation in such areas to determine the means required to enable families there to gain ownership of the land they were settled on. Work was also being done on making bank loans accessible to families to improve housing. Although some erosion of standards might have occurred in practice, there were no constitutional grounds for according privileges to any Dominican or foreign national prepared to invest in the Dominican Republic.

Efforts were being made by the Government and Congress to encourage development in order to improve the very low standard of living of large sectors of the population, but that was a process in which all the people would have to work together.

26. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA said that a programme of agrarian reform was under way in which technical assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture and support from the Agricultural Bank was being provided to enable small farmers to acquire land. Widespread corruption had in recent years led to abuse of the programme, but controls were being tightened to exclude applicants who were not small farmers and to actively target those who were. Efforts were also being made to get people in rural areas to live closer together in communities so that they could be provided with better services and amenities.

27. In 1996 the Government had submitted several fiscal reform bills to Congress but they had been rejected, with the result that work had to be carried out within the framework of existing law and the previous budget. Nevertheless, government revenue had been improved by tightening up the collection of income tax and Customs duties and by efforts to stamp out corruption and reduce tariffs. Copies of recent budgets could be made available to the Committee for it to see the changes that had been made. Social expenditures had been increased and more money was being spent on agriculture. Promotion of rural income was a priority target.

28. Mr. CEAUSU (Vice-Chairperson) took the Chair.

29. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) said it was unfortunately true that the gap between rich and poor in the Dominican Republic was increasing. At a time when prevailing economic circumstances were putting pressure on the labour market, it was proving difficult to find ways to combat poverty and improve the welfare of the poor.

30. Mr. GRISSA asked whether the Church had large holdings of land in the Dominican Republic, as was the case in many Latin American countries.

31. Mr. WIMER said that, even apart from the adverse effects of corruption, social security systems throughout the world in general and in Latin America in particular were in crisis as a result of radical change in labour markets and worker-employer relations and changes in the financial administration of economies tending towards privatization of social security. He asked what the thinking was on social security in the Dominican Republic and whether preference would be given to a system based on, say, the Chilean model or to one based purely on financial criteria, which brought little benefit to the most vulnerable. What measures, legal and otherwise, were in view to introduce a social security system? Was there any provision for broad consultation of the various social sectors to ensure that any social security system adopted would be of benefit to the population as a whole?

32. Mr. SADI asked whether the IMF or the World Bank was encouraging the Dominican Republic to join the universal trend towards adopting a market economy. If so, were the IMF guidelines found to be compatible with respect for economic, social and cultural rights?

33. Mr. ADEKUOYE said that the Dominican Republic had been asked in a number of different forums what action it was taking to prohibit employment of women underground. Although ILO had been informed that a tripartite government, employers and employees committee had been established to look into the matter, nothing appeared to have been done so far to prohibit such employment.

34. The Dominican Republic had not ratified ILO Convention No. 103 (Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952) or ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age Convention, 1973) the substance of which had nonetheless been incorporated in the country's Labour Code. He urged the Government to reconsider ratifying those conventions, since failure to do so meant that a subsequent government would in theory have no legal impediment to removing the relevant restrictions from the Labour Code, thus permitting the reintroduction of child labour.

35. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO said her earlier question on what action was being taken to reduce the gap between rich and poor had received only the partial answer that the problem was one of corruption. Failure to pay taxes was but one side of the question; the other was the need to ensure that measures were in place to collect taxes from those who could well afford to pay them. Had the Dominican Republic any fiscal reform programme under consideration that would make for a just taxation system?

36. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic) said that the Government had drafted proposals for fiscal reform in 1996 and they had been rejected by Congress. It was at present considering how to improve tax collection, increase the amount of tax paid by large property owners and introduce property tax. When complete, those proposals would be resubmitted to Congress, whose approval was necessary for any bill to be enacted.

37. In the Dominican Republic, unlike the case elsewhere, the Church had no large land holdings, owning only buildings and moveable property.

38. Several social security structures, including the Chilean model, were under consideration, but no final decision had yet been made. A number of factors still needed to be taken into account, such as the sums available for spending on social issues, the question of profit for the financial sector and the rapidly expanding interest of the private sector in that field, for example in the health services sector. A broad public debate was under way on the structure that would be most appropriate for Dominican society.

39. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) said that, in the face of world trends towards totally free market economies and competition to excess, the Dominican Republic would instead be seeking Congress approval for a socialized market economy of the kind practised by Germany and Chile in their different ways. There was support from the general public, the Government and the private sector for such a model. Another endeavour was to maintain or improve current levels of agricultural and industrial activity in the face of foreign competition. However, social and economic circumstances were in a state of constant flux, with the service sector now taking a larger share of the economy than the production sector.

40. No women or children were engaged in employment underground in the Dominican Republic. There was no demand for such labour underground, since any mining carried out in the country was relatively shallow and used advanced technology.

41. As to ratification of international treaties, the provisions of ILO Conventions Nos. 103 and 138 had been written into domestic law by incorporating them in the new Labour Code. However, the minimum age of 16 set by the Convention had been reduced to 15 in the Labour Code to take account of the earlier physical and mental maturation of children in tropical climates.

42. Mr. RATTRAY said he wondered how, in view of the increasing role played by the private sector in the Dominican economy, the State fulfilled its responsibilities in such matters as social security, housing, sanitation and health. The requirements of the Covenant could be fulfilled by a variety of mechanisms, but it was the duty of the State to ensure their implementation. The Government had cited a number of optimistic plans, such as the achievement of universal social security coverage. It would be useful to consider whether projects currently under development addressed the fundamental question of their sustainability. What plans had the State for ensuring their long-term financing?

43. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic) said that the Government was indeed according greater importance to the participation of the private sector, while recognizing that it was the role of the State to ensure compliance with the terms of the Covenant as well as with those of other international instruments. Essentially, it retained the role of distributor of resources.

44. The Dominican Republic was considering the problem of sustainability in the development of its long-term plans, and significant progress had been made. In fact, the three major political parties were now working together to create projects and programmes that could outlast the four-year governmental terms.

45. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) said that a pilot programme in education had been launched, with significant official support, for the purpose of eradicating outdated teaching practices. Unfortunately, some of the tests conducted had proved inadequate. The programme was under evaluation, with a view to creating a satisfactory long-term plan for broad-ranging reform of the Dominican school system. Incidentally, a new goal under the programme was to provide computers for all Dominican students.

46. Mr. GRISSA said that street children were an increasing common phenomenon in a number of Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Paraguay. Abandoned children were often in precarious health and prey to such dangers as sexual abuse and even murder. To what extent did that problem exist in the Dominican Republic and what measures were being taken to resolve it?

47. Mr. RIEDEL said that the corrected and expanded version of the report of the Dominican Republic (HR/CESCR/NONE/97/8, p. 5) suggested that the Government favoured the establishment of an optional protocol to the Covenant; it would be useful to learn of its views on that matter.

48. Mr. ANTANOVICH said that his country, Belarus, had undergone 75 years of five-year plans, the goals of which had mostly not been achieved. Though such plans served to focus and mobilize development plans, they primarily enabled new governments to criticize old ones for their failures. In his view, it was preferable to speak of long-term plans. The Committee's concluding observations (E/C.22/1994/15) demanded the cessation of forced evictions and called for a number of initiatives in the crucial area of housing. He wondered whether those suggestions would in fact be implemented. Again, it was disappointing that the Dominican delegation had failed to provide precise answers to the Committee's questions.

49. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO inquired if there were many poor older people in the Dominican Republic. It would be useful to know what measures the Government had envisaged or undertaken to provide care for such people, among them, for instance, the creation of residences, day-care facilities and daytime activity programmes.

50. Mr. ADEKUOYE said the corrected and expanded version of the report, page 7, stated that unemployment stood at 16.7 per cent of the economically active population and that the Government was striving to establish a programme similar to the one known as "Chole Joven", with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank. The delegation should describe the nature and purpose of that programme.

51. Page 8 stated that no statistics were available on occupational sickness and that, in 1995, 500 cases of occupational accidents had been reported to the Ministry of Labour. It would be helpful to know whether those cases had been investigated and prosecutions brought for negligence or breach of the regulations.

52. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking in his personal capacity, noted that paragraph 33 of the report indicated that the right to form trade unions was limited by certain constitutional provisions, among others, that their interests should be work-related. And yet, article 8, paragraph 1 (a), established the right to form trade unions for the promotion and protection of economic and social interests. Paragraph 58 set out the requirements for the formation and registration of a trade union. It would be helpful to know with which authority a trade union filed a registration application, and whether it resorted to the courts if the application was rejected.

53. Paragraph 53 of the report indicated that hygiene and safety standards were obligatory in the workplace. With reference to article 7, the Government should indicate whether it had established inspection procedures and how often such inspections were conducted; it should also describe the role and powers of labour inspectors. Could an inspector impose sanctions against an employer or shut down a workplace if conditions endangered the health or safety of workers?

54. Paragraph 93 made the troubling assertion that approximately 1 million Dominicans attended private schools. The question arose how such schools could be justified in a country as poor as the Dominican Republic. Did private schools receive subsidies under the national budget?

55. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) confirmed that there were in fact large numbers of street children in Dominican cities and urban centres, many of whom worked illegally. If the problem was to be addressed, both Government and private efforts would be needed. The authorities were working to expand and develop the children's homes system, which was inadequate to meet the needs of all abandoned children. In addition, private bodies were planning to set up facilities for children. The phenomenon of street children did indeed represent a challenge to Dominican society.

56. The Dominican Government favoured the preparation of an optional protocol but he had not been informed of any more recent developments.

57. Mr. TOCA SIMO (Dominican Republic) said article 15 of the Constitution established that it was in the highest interest of Dominican society for every Dominican to have a home on his own plot of land. The State was encouraging home loans precisely to provide all citizens with clean and comfortable homes.

58. In 1991, the Government had been censured for the violation of the right to housing with regard to the La Ciénaga and Los Guandules districts. In response, the Government had enacted a decree deploring their transformation into virtual concentration camps. Furthermore, one of the new Government's first acts had been to enact a law guaranteeing to the inhabitants of those districts the right to freedom of movement and providing for their protection by the military. Programmes were being developed to improve conditions in those areas.

59. The Vice-President had recently said that the Government intended to support all programmes that promoted low-income housing, to seek to reduce interest rates, to continue to assist mutual aid programmes of social solidarity in conjunction with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and to ensure that the private sector and society at large also played a role in the decision-making process. The President had announced that the Government had been discussing more than 100 projects for more than 9,000 housing units throughout the country and that subsidies might be granted to the neediest. A document would be made available to the Secretariat summarizing the Government's investment plans for 1996-2000, which totalled US$ 290 million and amounted to more than 27 per cent of the annual national budget over the next four years; 65,000 housing units were planned in all.

60. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic), referring to the situation of the elderly, said that in the past families had taken care of such persons, who were productive members of society. Community projects arranged for the elderly to look after their grandchildren so that the parents could go out to work; sometimes they cared for several additional children with the support of the Ministry of Education. There were also plans to improve their housing and to promote child-care centres so that they could earn money. In addition, there were projects to encourage women to work. Considerable resources were being allocated for the elderly.

61. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic) said that, in the public sector, persons over 65 years of age were entitled to a pension, and disability pensions were granted to persons who were unable to work because of an accident or illness. At least 60 per cent of the previous wage was paid. An effort was also being made to ensure that workers in the private sector also received a pension.

62. Working conditions in the Dominican Republic were comparable to those found throughout the Caribbean subregion. All workers were entitled to accident and unemployment insurance once they had worked for three months. Vocational training, a long-standing tradition in the Dominican Republic, was subsidized by the State, and the Church and private industry were also sometimes involved. INFOTEP (Technical and Vocational Training Institute) helped to ensure that the labour force met the needs of industry. The various industrial sectors had their own training schools, as did the tourist sector.

63. The Dominican Republic had a history of labour accidents and the amounts paid to persons who had been badly injured or maimed was minimal. As a result, under the new social security bill it was planned to increase compensation for injuries sustained at work. But admittedly, improvements still needed to be made in that area.

64. The right to form trade unions, even in the civil service, was guaranteed by the Constitution, provided such organizations were democratic, were strictly for labour matters and were peaceful. Workers had the right to strike, as long as it was done in conformity with the law and in connection with labour disputes. Strikes or slowdowns which affected the public administration or the activities of essential services were illegal.

65. Inspections were conducted at places of work, but labour inspectors did not have the legal capacity to close down a firm; their function was to give notice of infringements, and the firms concerned must then provide the Ministry of Labour with an explanation. If the infringement was serious, stronger measures might then be contemplated.

66. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic), responding to the comment that there were 1 million children in private schools, said that private education had in fact been on the rise, at both school and university level. The country had 1 State university, but 14 private universities. Owing to budgetary constraints, there were serious shortcomings in public education and many parents wished to make the sacrifice and send their children to private schools. Moreover, political disturbances usually affected public, and not private, schools. Conditions had nonetheless been improving and more children had been enrolling in State schools. The same held true for universities. All schools, public and private, were full. The State sometimes gave grants to the children of low-income families so that they could attend private school.

67. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO said that she was concerned about the problem of irresponsible mothers and wondered how such a situation had come about. Was appropriate and sufficient sex education provided, especially to adolescents? Were there any family planning centres? Were unmarried couples also entitled to protection? As she understood it, many children had been abandoned, but

the report made no mention of that fact. She would like information on how families in the Dominican Republic were protected, regardless of whether the parents were married or not.

68. Mr. THAPALIA asked whether implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights required legislation or whether it was automatically applicable. Could its provisions be invoked in court? What was being done to make domestic legislation compatible with the Covenant?

69. Mr. WIMER inquired what the Government did to protect the rights of manual labourers from the Dominican Republic living in the United States.

70. Mr. LANDOLFI (Dominican Republic), replying to the question on irresponsible mothers, acknowledged that the problem did exist. Many such mothers sent their children out in search of money, and those children wandered the streets, did odd jobs or committed petty theft. However, there had been a number of court rulings ordering mothers to provide for their offspring.

71. As to Mr. Thapalia's question, the Dominican Republic recognized the Covenant as part of its constitutional law. The answer to Mr. Wimer's question about labourers from the Dominican Republic residing in the United States and elsewhere was that, if such persons sought assistance, they could apply to the consulate of the Dominican Republic in the country concerned. From a legal point of view, the Constitution and domestic law protected citizens outside the national territory. He did not think that there was any bilateral agreement with the United States on that question, and he personally thought that something of the sort was needed.

72. Ms. SABATER DE MACARRULLA (Dominican Republic) thanked the Committee for its interest and its assistance. Her delegation had found its visit very instructive. It was prepared to forward to the Committee any additional information, statistics and publications it might request.

73. The CHAIRPERSON expressed gratitude to the delegation of the Dominican Republic for its cooperation and its contribution to the dialogue with the Committee. Although problems persisted, it was encouraging that the present Government was determined to act to resolve them. The Committee was thus convinced that the authorities of the Dominican Republic would do their best to fulfil that country's obligations under the Covenant.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.